



National Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

April 24, 2014

Aarron Reinert

Chair

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Vice-Chair

Drew Dawson
Designated Federal Officer
National EMS Advisory Council
Director, Office of EMS
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
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Dear Mr. Dawson:

In 2013, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) posed several questions to the National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC) on the ongoing utility and a possible revision to the 1996 *EMS Agenda for the Future*. Today, I am pleased to provide NHTSA with recommendations on the future of that vision document from the NEMSAC.

We ask that you implement these recommendations in coordination with agencies represented on the Federal Interagency Committee on EMS, who all play a significant role in supporting EMS systems across the country.

Thank you for your continued consideration of our recommendations and advice on emergency medical services.

Sincerely,

Aarron Reinert
Chair

The National EMS Advisory Council

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NEMSAC Report: The EMS Agenda for the Future

Recommendations

1. A major revision of the *EMS Agenda for the Future* should be undertaken as soon as possible;
2. The revision process should be guided by an external entity (not NEMSAC) that will ensure a consensus- and data-driven process with broad stakeholder representation. The goal should be to replicate the process used to develop the original EMS Agenda for the Future, published in 1996;
3. The U.S. Department of Transportation should seek financial support and assistance from FICEMS members to accomplish this task.

Rationale

As the EMS system has grown and evolved, many of the goals in the *1996 EMS Agenda for the Future* have been accomplished, such as Public Access to 9-1-1 and the National EMS Information System (NEMSIS). New and important issues like mobile integrated health care, evidence-based clinical practice and automatic crash notification are altering the mission of EMS but have not yet been integrated into a coordinated vision for our industry.

Priority

As the U.S. Department of Transportation and FICEMS consider the many important EMS projects under consideration, the subcommittee encourages them to prioritize the revision of the *EMS Agenda for the Future*. This document has played a vital role in guiding the EMS system for the past 17 years. A revised *EMS Agenda for the Future* will play the same role and time is of the essence.

Question # 1: Should the 1996 EMS Agenda for the Future be revised or updated?

Response: Revised.

Discussion: The committee believes that the EMS Agenda for the Future should be revised utilizing a multidisciplinary approach supported and coordinated by DOT.

Question # 2: Is there continued value in a national vision document for EMS?

Response: Yes.

Discussion: The 1996 Agenda for the Future is recognized as a cornerstone of EMS systems development.

Question # 3: What is the role of the Federal government in the development and publication of a National vision document?

Response: Leadership and support

Discussion: The Subcommittee believes the Federal Government plays the role of aggregator of resources – financial, scientific, educational, etc. - to ensure that national vision documents are updated, revised or developed so that the EMS industry operates on sound scientific evidence, thereby improving the health of our communities.

The Federal Government plays a supportive, not regulatory role by leveraging the resources of the Government and including expertise from every stakeholder. The Federal Government gathers the community of experts on a particular topic; creates an opportunity for sharing of information, evidence, best practices, theory and vision, and then, in a collaborative fashion communicates this aggregated knowledge to the community of users.

While regulation of the EMS industry is a state activity, many States rely upon Federal guidance in the development of statutes and rules. Vision documents that carry the Federal *imprimatur* are seen as a feasible starting point for state and local system enhancements. Also, because Federal funding may be tied to implementation of a vision document's goals and objectives, many States implement the goals in order to access those funding streams.

Finally, in its role supporting the development of national vision documents, the Federal Government is, by and large, considered to be a reasonable and neutral arbiter, and thus, best able to accomplish the role of bringing the brightest minds together for the development of vision documents.

Question # 4: What topics should be included in the document?

Response: The existing issues and topics, adding others relevant to the evolving “EMS” environment.

Discussion: The Subcommittee recommends that the existing 14 topics be evaluated and expanded including, but not limited to:

- Analysis of data for performance monitoring and performance improvement;
- Promoting a culture of safety in EMS including provider/patient/public safety and workplace wellness;
- Vision and scope of “EMS” for the future;
- Financing and reimbursement;
- Time-sensitive illnesses and injuries;
- Functional needs and limited access populations;
- Specialized care of the geriatric and pediatric population;
- Disaster preparedness and multi-casualty incident traditional and non-traditional response;
- Workforce issues:
 - Volunteerism,
 - Recruitment and retention,
 - Professionalism,
 - Career advancement and salary issues.

Question # 5: What should the revised document be titled?

Response: The authors should consider this after revising the document.